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# Israel paper gives account of deal

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JERUSALEM — A Washington-to-Jerusalem request in March 1985 — asking whether Israel could help free Beirut hostage William Buckley — was the beginning of the Iranian arms deal, according to a Tel Aviv newspaper report.

The prestigious daily *Heeretz* said the message was addressed to then-Prime Minister Shimon Peres and was believed sent by either CIA chief William Casey or Robert McFarlane, then head of the National Security Council.

*Heeretz* said Peres talked with Al Schwimmer, the USA-born founder of Israel Aircraft Industries. He proposed a "guns for Buckley deal" using the contacts of Israeli arms dealer Yaacov Nimrodi.

Nimrodi said last week he met in London with Iranian middleman Manucher Ghorbanifar. Ghorbanifar, who traveled secretly to Israel, told Nimrodi that Iran would free Buckley — the CIA station chief in Beirut — in return for 500 TOW anti-tank missiles.

At the end of August a shipment of 100 missles was agreed to — on condition that McFarlane state in writing that the deal was being made on Washington's behalf.

When the arms arrived in Iran, Tehran said it would not release Buckley unless another 400 missiles were sent. Jerusalem agreed and within an hour of the missiles' arrival in Iran on Sept. 19, USA citizen Benjamin Weir was released.

The *Atlanta Constitution* and *Atlanta Journal* reported Sunday that even after the sale of 500 anti-tank missiles to Iran failed to gain Buckley's release, McFarlane offered the Iranians up to 4,000 more missiles in exchange for Buckley and other hostages.

Also Sunday, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir exchanged friendly messages with President Reagan but stopped short of promising Israel wouldn't sell more weapons to Iran.

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